

Domination
Abulhisham KH
Kashi Art Gallery
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Authority is part of our daily life. It appears to be integral to each and every society. There is always one to dominate and another to rebel. Each plays an important role in maintaining some sort of workable balance.

Power is something that should be earned and its position sustained through trust and ethical responsibility. Unfortunately, some govern with threats and fear tactics. This is not *respected* authority; it is domination. When authority becomes oppressive, it is the duty of renegades to express dissent. To quote Leonardo di Vinci, "Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence".

Let's consider a few famous rebels...Galileo seriously upset the church in 1610 when he suggested the Earth revolved around the Sun; he was labeled a heretic. Mohandas Gandhi didn't feel Indian people were being fairly treated by the British so he rebelled with non-violent protests. Rosa Parks became "the mother of the civil rights movement" because she felt she had a right to sit in any empty seat on the public bus. Renegades within society propagate opposing opinions to current norms and practices and often create a catalyst for change.

Abulhisham's artwork playfully explores the notion of authority and domination and the process of rebellion. He incongruously positions uniforms, classic icons of authority, by having dwarfs, demons, or the physically hindered wear them. In some cases, the uniform is left empty, precariously dangling from a stick. If an able bodied person is wearing a uniform, it is of garish colour and design; eradicated of any dignity generally associated with such a costume.

Arches and fortresses, further symbols of domination, are also mocked through the use of colour, the flimsiness of design, or the materials that Abulhisham selected to use. (i.e.: coir ash to draw the arch of triumph over the dwarfed man in uniform). To leave the viewer without a doubt of his intentions, Abulhisham utilizes quickly recognizable, rebellious hand gestures as well as textual references that further challenge or demean authority.

The news is filled with stories of domination and misuse of authority - locally, nationally and internationally. Abulhisham's work recognizes the necessity of authority, despite its potentially undesirable qualities while simultaneously reminding us to acknowledge and hopefully even respect the rebel's role.

Dorrie Younger
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